

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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Washington, D.C. -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has joined with the Center for Evaluative Clinical Sciences (CECS) at Dartmouth (Hanover, NH) Medical School in establishing the VA National Quality Scholars Fellowship Program to develop a fellowship curriculum in the science of health-care quality.

"VA, with its focus on quality care for a defined population of patients, its national health-care delivery network, and its extensive experience in medical education and training, presents an optimal setting to seed the scholarly development of the quality improvement discipline," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer.

According to Dr. David P. Stevens, VA chief academic affiliations officer, the joint effort "is certain to advance the academic discipline of health-care quality improvement."

Coordinated by VA's Office of Academic Affiliations, the fellowship program will provide learning opportunities for physician scholars to create and apply new knowledge to improve health care. Physicians who have completed their residency training will be eligible for the two-year funded fellowships at several VA facilities. These sites will be linked electronically and by two-way interactive video to develop a virtual national health-care quality improvement laboratory.

A panel, chaired by Dr. Paul Batalden, director, Health Care Improvement Leadership Development, CECS, recommended the sites with the following senior scholars to oversee the program:

- Dr. David Aron, associate chief of medicine, Cleveland VA Medical Center;
- Dr. Robert Dittus, director, General Internal Medicine, and director, Health Services Research, Nashville, Tenn., VA Medical Center;
- Dr. Catarina Kiefe, Ph.D., quality management consultant to the chief of staff, Birmingham, Ala., VA Medical Center;
- Dr. Seth Landefeld, chief, Geriatrics Section, San Francisco VA Medical Center;
- Dr. Gary Rosenthal, director, Division of Internal Medicine, Iowa City VA Medical Center; and
- Dr. William Weeks, network quality management officer, Veterans Integrated Service Network 1, White River Junction, Vt.